



Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

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January 31, 2011

Testimony in Support of the following two bills:

House Bill No. 6156 AN ACT CONCERNING FARMERS' MARKETS.

House Bill No. 5202 AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS FOR FARMLAND PRESERVATION.

Submitted by: Donald W. Tuller, President, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, a statewide nonprofit membership organization of over 5,000 families dedicated to farming and the future of Connecticut agriculture.

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, Members of the Environment Committee:

On behalf of the members of Connecticut Farm Bureau, I urge you to support HB 5202-Bonding For Farmland Preservation, and HB 6156-An Act Concerning Farmers Markets. HB 5202 will authorize additional bonding authorization for the Farmland Preservation Purchase of Development Rights Program. This is needed to continue the program into the next fiscal year in a meaningful way. The PDR program has been making headway on reaching the goal of protecting 130,00 acres, approaching 40,000 acres so far. The people and the process are in place, and the recent progress is helping farmers to consider participating in the program. The lump sum bonding authorization that happened these last few years, has been critical, this bill will continue that, and the 5000 members of CFBA are counting on your help.

HB 6156 An Act Concerning Farmers Markets, will relieve farmers that participate in Farmers Markets from having to pay for what amount to duplicate permits for the same activity when they change locations. This last year I participated in the Simsbury Farmers' Market, and last year, we went to the Hillstead Museum Farmers' Market. I have a Food Service Permit from the Farmington Valley Health District. Because I was in their jurisdiction at my home farm, and both markets, I needed no additional permits, at \$100 each, that would not have lasted all season. Other farmers from outside the District, that came to markets in that district, had to get a permit, even though they had one in their own district, using the same set of inspection regulations. This act will require Health Districts to recognize valid Food Service Permits from other Districts. There is no reason for them to not be cooperating with each other. Some farmers go to many markets, and are being charged numerous permitting fees, which is causing them to attend fewer markets, which results in less choice for members of the public, and forces farmers to abandon smaller markets. The Farmers' Market Movement has been a great success story, and passing HB 6156 will help it to continue moving forward, to the benefit of the people of Connecticut, as well as Connecticut Farmers.